

January 16, 2005

Freedom

Watch

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan

*Afghan native
returns to homeland
as U.S. Soldier
Page 8*





Marine Cpl. Rich Mattingly

Sunset security

A Marine from "America's Battalion," 3rd Bn., 3rd Marines, mans a .50 caliber machine gun atop a HMMWV during a patrol in Paktia province. The Marines regularly patrol the area in support of stability and security operations in CTF Thunder's area of responsibility.

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Spc. Jack Daniels, 450th Civil Affairs Bn., gives a soccer ball to a boy in Moushwai village. Daniels, an Afghan native, received a chance to return to his homeland after he joined the U.S. Army to protect both his native country and the country he now loves and calls home.

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Freedom Watch

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Louisiana engineers wrap up OEF tour

Story by Staff Sgt.
Monica R. Garreau
17th Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — After a year-long, history-making deployment, the Soldiers of Company C, 528th Engineer Battalion, are headed back home to Louisiana. But their contributions to Operation Enduring Freedom will continue to be appreciated for years to come.

While in Afghanistan, the Louisiana National Guard engineers were spread throughout the southern region of the country, constructing living quarters, shower and dining facilities, and force protection barriers. They also participated in a major road construction project between Kandahar and Tarin Kowt, and upgraded the landing strip at Forward Operating Base Ripley to support C-130 flight operations.

"One of our biggest contributions is the build up of the forward operating bases," said Sgt. 1st Class Darain Hayes, Co. C, 528th Eng. Bn., platoon sergeant.

While working on a barracks construction project, the vertical engineers of the company were able to complete one set of living quarters a day. A big morale booster that was known to light up the faces of the Soldiers who lived in a tent in the morning and returned from their mission in the after-



Sgt. 1st Class Darain Hayes

noon to find a hard stand building to sleep in, said Hayes.

"You get a good feeling from that," he said.

Company C arrived in Afghanistan ahead of the rest of the battalion, which is deployed to a combat zone for the first time in its history as a unit. Despite the hardship of deploying without its parent unit, the Soldiers worked hard to meet the challenges in front of them and "adapt and overcome," said Co. C 1st Sgt. Frank Washington.

"They came a long way, and it has shown from day one to where we're at today," he said.

The Soldiers said they are happy with the experience gained on their deployment. Most performed their military occupational specialty as formally trained. And those few

who didn't were able to train with their fellow Soldiers and gain a new skill, said Hayes.

For example, the plumbers in Co. C were not able to utilize their skills installing sewage and water systems on the projects. Instead, they cross trained with the vertical engineers

and electricians.

"They're still going back with skills and knowledge they didn't have when they came over here," said Hayes.

Aside from technical expertise gained through the deployment and quality of life improvements made for their fellow service members, the Soldiers were also proud to have worked with Afghan construction workers on several projects.

"We got to give the local national people a job," said Spc. Mark "Bubba" Adcock, a heavy machine operator from Co. C's horizontal platoon. "We worked with them every day and you build a relationship with them."

Although the Soldiers of Co. C will no longer be serving in Afghanistan, their hard work is left as their legacy to those who remain. They will carry that knowledge with them and look back on their time here with pride.



Staff Sgt. Rickey Gaines

Above: Sgt. Eric Armstrong (top) and Sgt. Christopher Dickens, both of Co. C, 528th Eng. Bn., measure the base for the stairs leading to the observation deck they constructed atop the Taliban's Last Stand building at Kandahar Airfield. The Louisiana National Guard Soldiers completed their year-long deployment to Afghanistan this month.

Top: Soldiers from Company C, 528th Eng. Bn., spread concrete during construction of the Military Police Command Post on Kandahar Airfield.



Sgt. 1st Class Darain Hayes

Soldiers from Company C, 528th Eng. Bn., construct the floor of the tactical operations center at FOB Ripley in southern Afghanistan.

"We'll leave here knowing that we have made a difference," said Adcock. "A difference in quality of life."

ANP helps pilgrims start a safe Hajj

Muslims on sacred journey to Mecca assisted by ANP

Story and photos by Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

HERAT, Afghanistan — It is a tradition that has lasted more than 1,400 years. The Hajj, or sacred pilgrimage to Mecca, is the pinnacle of life for Muslims throughout the world.

The Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam. At least once in a lifetime, all Muslims, male and female, are expected to make the journey to Mecca, which culminates Jan. 22 this year. There, they pay homage to the sacred Kaaba, a black stone that Muslims believe was given to Abraham by Gabriel. It is what they face during their daily prayers no matter where they are.

This year's Hajj comes at the beginning of a new national government determined to provide security for Afghanistan and its people.

For Muslims in western Afghanistan, Herat city was their point of departure on the journey to Mecca. There, Afghan National Police took the lead in keeping the Hajj secure for the pilgrims.

Every step of the way, from collection



An ANP officer stands his post at the Herat city airport to ensure Afghans leaving on the Hajj do so in a secure environment. ANP officers played a vital role in guiding Afghans and showing them where they needed to be to make the pilgrimage to Mecca as safe as possible.

point to the flightline, the ANP officers are there providing security.

Proud of their role in helping with such an enormous event, Col. Noor Ahammad, one of the Hajj security commanders, said his team was primarily on hand in case of a serious incident. While the situation remained calm, his officers found different ways to lend a hand to the out-of-townners.

"Right now, security is very good in Herat," said Ahammad. "But most people are not from Herat city, and we do our best to guide them around."

While only a small percentage of Afghans complete the pilgrimage each year, nearly everyone in this predominantly Muslim country uses the event as a time for charity.

Herat city residents opened their homes to sponsor the pilgrims coming in from districts throughout the region. Each day, the sponsors brought the pilgrims to a central point in Herat city where they were registered and awaited flights.

This year, the early flights departing from Herat were delayed for days because of inclement weather.

Even during the extended periods of waiting, the pilgrims at the collection point stayed calm and positive, except for the occasional disagreement amongst

travelers, said Ahammad.

"One of the reasons we are here is to calm minor disputes between the pilgrims," said Ahammad.

Securing Herat city for the Hajj meant long days for him. But despite the extra workload, he was very happy to assist in the process, said Mortaza, Afghan National Police officer.

The 19-year-old officer looks forward to the day he will make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and sees his job this year as a way to make his Hajj more special.

"This job is very special for me, because we are helping our society and people," said Mortaza.

For the pilgrims, the once in a lifetime event is made even better with the ever-improving conditions throughout Afghanistan.

"I am very thankful for the security this year," said Abdul Shakoor.

Traveling two days before he arrived in Herat, Shakoor was very positive about conditions in the province, something that will remain on his mind during his Hajj.

"When I am in Mecca, I will pray for more snow and rain so the drought will stop," said Shakoor. "I will pray for the continued development of my country, and I will pray for continued peace so Afghanistan can have a bright future."



An ANP officer stands guard outside a Hajj collection point in Herat city.

Afghan med students get hands-on training

Story and photo by
Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl
17th Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM, Afghanistan — Nothing compares to the light of knowledge that shines in a student's eyes when he gains understanding.

At the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team in southern Afghanistan, 50 Afghan medical students have this expression nearly every day, as they attend what Dr. (Col.) Richard Gonzalez calls "Practical Medicine 101."

"These students are extremely well-prepared academically," said the strategic health coordinator for Kandahar Airfield. "We're simply enriching their curriculum by giving them practical experience."

The students are part of a six-month pilot program that gives the future Afghan doctors hands-on training. The students are learning basic and advanced life support, ventilation, suture techniques and wound treat-

ment. Coalition doctors from throughout the combined/joint operations area and medics from the Kandahar PRT are teaching the classes.

"They're very book smart, but they don't have the hands-on training they need," said Spc. James Wilson, Kandahar PRT medic.

Medical students in Afghanistan don't participate in internships that afford them the opportunity to treat patients. Instead, they observe other doctors.

The purpose of this class is to give them the experience of conducting physical examinations and diagnosing patients.

While Coalition doctors teach the physical examination portion of the class, it's the medics, using their own experiences, who coach the students while they conduct hands-on training to develop their basic life sustainment skills.

The doctors have the knowledge and experience to teach the examination and diagnosis part of the class, but the medics have



Afghan medical students demonstrate a proper lung exam for Dr. (Col.) Richard Gonzalez (right). Gonzales coordinates and supervises a training program provided to the Afghan medical students.

more first-hand experience with basic life support and first aid, said Staff Sgt. Joseph P. Buhain, Kandahar PRT medical non-commissioned officer in charge.

Buhain, who helped to establish the class, and his medics, are teaching skills like basic first aid, ventilation and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The medics accomplished a goal they were determined to meet.

"This is above and beyond what we're required to do, but we believe we can make more of a difference," said Buhain.

"We want to leave here knowing we're leaving something good behind, instead of just leaving," said Spc. Lance

Shirley, another PRT medic. "Looking back, we're going to know we were part of a pyramid event."

The pyramid event comes from the additional doctors who will be trained by the current students.

"We will select a few students from this class, and they will teach the next class," said Gonzalez. "We will supervise it, but they will be the ones conducting the training."

"The impact of what we're doing is huge," said Sgt. April Wine, Kandahar PRT medic. "Our small group is going to have impact on millions, and that makes it extremely important."

Enduring Voices

In which skill do you feel it is most important to maintain proficiency?



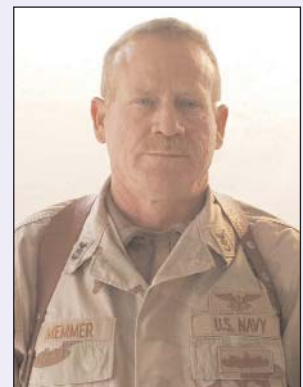
Air Force Senior Airman Brad Pulvermacher
455th ESFS
"I think it's important to maintain professionalism so that you can always stay respectful."



Spc. Travis Alexander
LTF-725
"I feel all skills are important, because you have to know all aspects of your job to get the mission done right."



Lt. Col. Bobby Mundell
CTF Thunder
"I feel interpersonal skills are important, because it's important to know how to talk to others and treat them with respect."



Navy Master Chief Larry Memmer
VAQ-133
"Leadership, so that everyone stays safe and highly trained."

Combat driving

Soldiers build, maintain skills

Story and photo by
Spc. Cheryl Ransford
17th Public Affairs Detachment

HERAT PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM, Afghanistan — Maintaining skills is an essential part of being a Soldier, especially in a combat zone. And having extra skills is equally important in a mission as diverse as Operation Enduring Freedom.

For Soldiers who drive regularly, knowing how to operate a vehicle with a trailer attached is a very important skill.

To help the Soldiers become proficient in this skill set, Sgt. John Fox, Task Force Longhorn motor sergeant, conducts trailer classes to teach TF Longhorn Soldiers to drive with a trailer, or just improve their current knowledge of the subject.

The infantrymen of Task Force 168, who are tasked with providing force protection to the Herat PRT, took advantage of the training to enhance their abilities on missions.

"The Soldiers who are part of Task Force 168 are a line squad," said Fox. "It is important for them to know how to drive and take corners with a trailer hooked to the vehicle, because they never know when something might happen to one of the vehicles they are driving. If they can't drive with a trailer, they could be in a lot of trouble when the time comes for them to tow a



Sgt. John Fox, TF Longhorn motor sergeant (right), and Cpl. Kevin Sorenson, TF 168, ground guide Pfc. Jeremy Stanley, TF 168, as he learns to back up with a trailer in the TF Longhorn motorpool during a class on driving with trailers.

broken-down vehicle."

Since they also serve as a quick reaction force, they need to be ready for every possible situation.

"We do a lot of training," said Staff Sgt. Bradley Bergeman, TF 168 squad leader. "When we aren't outside the gate conducting missions, we are training so the next mission is that much more successful."

Along with training for possible breakdowns, the team is also responsible for picking up and dropping off equipment for transport to other locations, requiring the use of trailers.

"Many times, when a piece of equipment needs to go to another location or come to

us, it will be transported by air," said Bergeman. "If the team can't back-up properly, they won't be able to load or unload the equipment."

Knowing the process necessary to accomplish a task is only the first step, he said.

"While many people can tell you how to drive with a trailer, actually doing it can be harder than it looks," said Bergeman. "If any of the squad members want to know how to do something, all they have to do is ask. There is always someone who is available to teach them how to do what they don't already know. Besides, the more they know, the better Soldiers they will be."

AAFES SERVICES HOURS OF OPERATION

Bagram Air Base

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| PX | Massage |
| 0230-1630 | 0400-1800 |
| Shoppette | Alterations |
| 0230-1630 | 0430-1430 |
| Burger King | Embroidery Shop |
| 0430-1730 | 0430-1430 |
| Food Court | Gift Shops |
| 0600-1630 | 0430-1430 |
| Barber Shop | Sports Apparel |
| 0430-1530 | 0430-1430 |
| Day Spa | Coffee Shop |
| 0400-1600 | 24 hours |

Kandahar Airfield

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| PX | Day Spa |
| 0500-1700 | 0500-1700 |
| Burger King | Alterations |
| 0430-1730 | 0500-1700 |
| Coffee Shop | Embroidery Shop |
| 24hrs | 0500-1700 |
| Pizza Hut | Gift Shops |
| 0600-1800 | 0500-1700 |
| Subway | Sports Apparel |
| 0600-1430 | 0500-1700 |
| Main Barber Shop | Black Ops Store |
| 0500-1700 | 0500-1700 |
| Lagoon Barber Shop | Leather Shop |
| 0300-1700 | 0500-1700 |

TF Phoenix

| |
|--------------------|
| PX |
| 0430-1630 |
| Barber Shop |
| 0330-1530 |
| Alterations |
| 0330-1630 |
| Coffee Shop |
| 24 hours |

Kabul

| |
|--------------------|
| PX |
| 0430-1630 |
| Barber Shop |
| 0330-1530 |
| Coffee Shop |
| 24 hours |

** All times in
Zulu/GMT*

Surveyors lay groundwork for construction

Story and photo by Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ORGUN-E, Afghanistan — Extensive planning goes into every building, road and airstrip that's constructed in Afghanistan. Even before the plans can be drawn, surveyors document the landscape. And before the first shovel moves earth, surveyors discuss exactly where it needs to be moved.

As permanent construction continues throughout Operation Enduring Freedom, teams of surveyors are spread throughout Afghanistan to facilitate new projects.

On Forward Operating Base Orgun-E in eastern Afghanistan, the new construction on the drawing board is an airfield and the installation of lavatory facilities.

A three-man team from the 367th Engineer Battalion has a large impact on the total construction effort on the FOB in Paktika province.

Though each member of the team is from a different unit and hometown, their job in OEF is an opportunity to come together to accomplish an essential mission.

Using a Geodimeter, a system that automatically calculates elevation, northing and easting, the surveyors construct a computerized model of the terrain.

The bulk of their work is methodically canvassing the terrain by lining up the Geodimeter with a marking rod.

Predominately a two-man job, having three on a survey team keeps a person free to speed up the mission by compiling computer data, running another marking



Sgt. Joseph Rivers, HHC, 367th Eng. Bn., lines up the Geodimeter with a marking rod to record points used to create a computerized model of FOB Orgun-E. Rivers' survey team was creating the computerized model of FOB Orgun-E for planners to determine the best location to place new lavatory facilities.

rod or simply helping the team move from place to place, said Sgt. Joseph Rivers, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 367th Eng. Bn., team leader.

"With having such a small team, it is nice to have another person," said Rivers.

As technical engineering specialists, each of the surveyors has a wide range of skills. All have training in both computerized and manual drafting on horizontal and vertical projects, in addition to their surveying skills. They can also analyze soil samples.

"Our predominate mission here in

Afghanistan has been surveying airfields," said Spc. Travis Clifford, HHC, 367th Eng. Bn.

At FOB Orgun-E, surveying the terrain before beginning construction on something as simple as a flat stretch of land is still very important, said Clifford.

"Once the planners get a computer model of the land, they can plan for how much material or equipment they will need before coming out to this location," said Clifford.

See Survey, Page 14

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

Soldiers from Co. A, 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt., run up a rocky hill in Oruzgan province during a morning PT run. The Soldiers are responsible for security and stability operations in the region and must maintain a high state of physical readiness for missions by conducting varied forms of physical training.

*Photo by Spc. Melvin Krambule
Co. A, 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt.*

If you have high quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to stumpc@baf.afgn.army.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.



Afghan returns to homeland as U.S. Soldier

Story and photos by Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

HERAT PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM
Afghanistan — Most Soldiers have different ways to remain motivated and focused while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom. For some, it is an opportunity to make the world a safer place. For others, it is a chance to help a thriving population.

For Spc. Jack Daniels, 450th Civil Affairs Battalion, deploying to Afghanistan was a chance to come home. It was a chance to help rebuild his homeland. But most importantly, it was a chance to serve in the U.S. Army.

While Jack Daniels is an alias he uses to keep his family in Afghanistan safe, his contributions are countless in the reconstruction efforts throughout Herat province.

Born and raised in northern Afghanistan, Daniels, along with his mother, brother and two sisters, immigrated to the United States more than four years ago. Fleeing from the fighting and instability under the Taliban regime, Daniels and his family came to the United States for security and the opportunity for a better life.

Overcoming a limited knowledge of the English language, he was the first in his family to graduate high school and had enrolled in college to study business.

But like many, the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, sparked a desire to join the U.S. Army to fight terrorism and prevent future attacks. Daniels also desired to fight the Taliban regime — a group that killed his father and drove his family from their homeland.

“In some ways, I looked at it as a way to fight back against the Taliban, but other reasons were much more important to me,” said Daniels.

He said his hatred of the Taliban was over-shadowed by his new love for the United States and for the service members risking their lives for his home country.

“Since I lived in a country that supports me — I wanted to support it,” said Daniels. “I thought this is the best way I could help U.S. troops.”

Ignoring pleas from his family not to return to Afghanistan, he joined the Army as a combat interpreter.

“They kept on saying, ‘You just came from there, why would you want to go back?’” he said.

Since he is fluent in Pashto and Dari, his job as an interpreter was a perfect fit. He completed basic training, advanced individual training and two weeks after graduation was deployed to Afghanistan as an individual augmentee.

Although he initially envisioned working with a combat unit, Daniels was instead assigned to the civil affairs team working for the Herat Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Having a fluent interpreter and Afghan native opens many doors for the team in terms of cultural understanding. But despite Daniel’s knowledge of Afghanistan, he has a few things to learn about how civil affairs can help his homeland.

“Even though Daniels has huge potential in what he can contribute to our team, he is still a Soldier new to the Army and OEF,” said Sgt. 1st Class Wiley Jones, 450th CA Bn., team non-commissioned officer in charge. “There is a lot about civil affairs he still needs to be taught.”

For now, Daniels is accompanying his civil affairs team on as



Above: Spc. Jack Daniels, 450th Civil Affairs Bn. combat interpreter, looks on as he and his civil affairs team work in the Adraskan province. Daniels, a native of Afghanistan joined the Army to lend a hand in support of OEF.



Left: Daniels takes notes as his civil affairs team meets with the deputy governor of Adraskan province.

many missions as possible.

With a short haircut and quiet demeanor, he blends into the crowd like any other 20-year-old Soldier.

But while he learns more about his job in civil affairs, Daniels doesn’t always immediately reveal his nationality to the Afghans he is working with. Often they will say things they don’t think he will understand.

“Everywhere we have been I have been hearing people say, ‘Thank God they are here, God help them,’” said Daniels. “They are not saying this because they know that I understand them.

They are grateful the U.S. is here to help Afghanistan. I am grateful the U.S. is here to help Afghanistan.”

The reaction of the people and his initial exposure to civil affairs has him very excited for the rest of the

deployment.

“I never would have imagined many years ago that I would be in this position to help Afghanistan,” said Daniels.

Once he gets his feet wet, Jones looks forward to giving him the freedom to plan projects and interact with local leaders.

“He is a perfect fit for this job,” said Jones. “Who knows better what Afghans need than an Afghan?”

His mission focused on reconstruction and not combat came as a surprise to him, but Daniels is happy with his role doing what he initially joined the Army to do — protect U.S. Soldiers.



Wolfhounds Soldier through the holidays

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Combined Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

WAZA KHOWA, Afghanistan — The Soldiers of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, didn't use the Christmas season as a reason to let up on their daily patrols in Afghanistan's eastern Paktika province.

Instead, the infantrymen soldiered through the holidays to ensure stability and security in the region.

One such December patrol lasted about three hours and took them through three villages, in what isn't much more than a barren countryside that surrounds their base here.

The Soldiers first checked on the construction of a school the 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., "Wolfhounds" funded in Khezer Kheyl, and asked locals if they were satisfied with it.

Acting on recent intelligence, the patrol then headed to Khoday Nazar Kor, a small hamlet built into the side of a mountain. There they searched for signs of anti-Coalition activity.

After thoroughly searching the area, the Soldiers moved back out on patrol to the third area on their route.

The Soldiers stopped in Marjaneh where they patrolled the nearly-deserted bazaar area before handing out blankets and winter coats to some of the villagers.

The mission was a prime example of the diversity of the operation here — hunting insurgents one moment, then distributing items to help the locals stay warm the next.

One of the battalion's goals is to win the Afghan people's confidence, as well as ensure the area is free of anti-Coalition militants, said 1st Lt. Neil Armstrong, a platoon leader in Co. C, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt.

For the Soldiers, that means switching back and forth between war fighter and good will ambassador, said Spc. Jonathan Low, an infantryman with Co. C., 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt.

"I look at it this way — these people are our friends, and they need our help," he said.

Like every other mission the Wolfhounds conduct, this patrol's underlying purpose was to show a presence in the area, letting any insurgents know there is a Coalition presence here.

"We do patrols like that pretty much every day," said Armstrong. "We always attempt to give out humanitarian aid on

Spc. Jonathan Low, a designated marksman for Co. C, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., uses the scope on his M14 rifle to scan the horizon from a hilltop in Khoday Nazar Kor during a December patrol.

those patrols too, especially in the smaller villages."

Although the mission was a familiar one, it wasn't to be taken lightly.

"Complacency kills is what they say," said Low.

At one point in the mission, while on a hilltop in Khoday Nazar Kor, he spent a moment scanning the horizon through the powerful scope of his M-14 rifle, usually carried by designated marksmen like Low, looking for enemy activity.

"I noticed somebody on a bike, and I was just checking to make sure they weren't carrying any weapons or anything like that," he said.

The Soldiers returned to their base cold and dusty as usual, but safe and with the knowledge they are helping the people of the surrounding communities.



Cpl. Marcus Denny, a team leader from Co. C, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., patrols the desolate streets of Marjaneh last month.



Force protection team navigates PRT to success

Focal points lead to stability, security in Herat province

Story and photos by Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

HERAT PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM, Afghanistan — With every new road or school opening you will find them. From the compound's front gate to each village, force protection Soldiers provide security for the civil affairs personnel as they facilitate the reconstruction throughout Afghanistan.

To the common observer, most provincial reconstruction team force protection personnel appear to be no more than bodyguards standing ready as civil affairs teams move from village to village.

But in Herat, like all PRTs, the force protection team's mission extends far beyond their role of security, into a relationship that keeps both them and civil affairs teams safe, effective and relevant as reconstruction takes place.

Force protection team members here work to secure their home base and the airfields in Herat, but their skills are especially put to the test when they roll out on convoy operations with the civil affairs personnel.

"When we are on a (convoy operation), we focus on three major areas — situational awareness, accountability and navigation," said Staff Sgt. Bradley Bergeman, Herat PRT force protection squad leader.

Sometimes covering hundreds of kilometers at a time, the key to success in all the areas Bergeman mentioned is preparation.

And no area of preparation is more important than navigation.

"Getting the convoy to the destination is our responsibility," he said. "The (civil affairs) team tells us the points they want to go and we get them there."

With many hard to find road dirt roads traveling over treacherous passes in Herat, one key to successful navigation has come through continuity, said Bergeman.



Spc. Michael Elmer (left) and Spc. Conor Champley, both of Herat PRT's force protection team, pull perimeter security during a village assessment.

After each mission, the force protection team completes an extensive after action review to outline the route traveled and determine the positive and negative aspects of the mission.

"I don't consider any mission successful until I know that the next

group that will travel to the area I was just at doesn't make the same mistakes we did," he said.

Successful preparation for the Herat force protection team also includes equipment.

"We have to plan for everything," said Bergeman.

From tow straps to jacks, flares and medical kits, the force protection team has developed extensive tool kits and checklists for each vehicle in the convoy.

Finally, successful preparation has come through training.

"Training is very important to sustain good situational awareness," said Bergeman. "For every lesson we learn in the field, we return and make sure each person in the company learns that lesson."

Situational awareness for the force protection team also means having a plan for each contingency.

The job is extremely rewarding, considering everything the force protection team does for the reconstruction mission, said Spc. Matthew Moritz, Herat PRT force protection.

"One of the best parts of our job is knowing we are going places Americans have never been before, bringing things people need," he said.



1st Lt. Travis Menke (right), Herat PRT force protection, discusses the direction of a convoy operation with Sgt. 1st Class Wiley Jones, 450th CA Bn., after a village assessment.

HA mission improves Afghan quality of life

Story and photos by
Spc. Cheryl Ransford
17th Public Affairs Detachment

SAYED KHAIL, Afghanistan — Providing humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people is one way the Coalition is working to improve their quality of life.

Task Force Eagle made a large donation last month to children in Sayed Khail, a village neighboring Bagram Air Base.

"We try to go out as often as possible to provide needed items to the people in the villages surrounding Bagram," said 1st Lt. Justin Wilkerson, TF Eagle personnel officer.

"Many of the villagers are poor and can't afford to buy the things they need to stay warm, so we are supplementing their needs with the items sent from home."

While this isn't the first time TF Eagle has provided assistance to the people of Sayed Khail, the villagers are still very responsive and thankful for what they received.

Many of the children who received the assistance were orphans who have very little of their own, said Wilkerson.

"When we look for locations to hand out donations, we try to find the people who need the most assistance and focus our efforts on how we can help them," he said. "Once the location is selected, we gather the donations we have for each age group we are expecting to help, and make sure we have enough for the number of people we could possibly help during the mission."

During most missions, the Soldiers of TF Eagle are able to provide assistance for nearly 200 people, most of whom are children.

Although the focus of humanitarian missions is the people they are helping, the Soldiers providing the assistance take away a sense of accomplishment.

"Every time we come out to Sayed Khail, the people are very friendly and welcoming of us in the village," said Sgt. Tara Holloman, TF Eagle. "Seeing their faces when they receive all the things we bring to them is something that I will remember forever. There is nothing else like it."

While not all Soldiers walk away with the exact same feeling, they all know the assistance they are providing to the people will help them in ways they never thought possible, something the Afghans



Above: Sgt. Tara Holloman (left), TF Liberty, hands clothes to Afghan girls, while Capt. Kristen O'Keefe, 125th MI Bn., sorts through a box of girls' clothes during a humanitarian assistance mission in Sayed Khail village in central Afghanistan's Parwan province.

Left: 1st Lt. Justin Wilkerson (right), TF Eagle personnel officer, reaches for a box being handed down from the back of an LMTV. More than 200 Afghans benefitted from the humanitarian assistance mission organized by TF Eagle, receiving clothes, shoes and food to help get them through the harsh winter.

greatly appreciate.

"I want to thank you all for what you are doing," said General Maulano, a local leader. "You are providing the people of my village with many things they don't have access to and will need for the winter."

By providing the villagers with clothes and food for the winter, the Soldiers of TF Eagle are showing the people of Afghanistan that they care, and are willing to help them during their time of need.

"As winter grows harsher, it is harder for the villagers to be able to get into the larger towns for some things they may need," said Holloman. "However, when

we visit the villages, we are able to provide those items to them without them having to travel in the harsh winter elements."

During an afternoon tea following the assistance for the children, Maulano asked for the continued assistance from the Soldiers and promised further assistance from himself.

"I am willing to do what I can to pay you back for all you have done for the people of this village," he said. "If there is anything I can do for you, I will do it."

With a promise and a glass of tea, the bonds between the Coalition and the Afghan people were strengthened once again.

Coalition clinic provides crucial care to Afghans

Story and photo by Spc. Dijon Rolle
17th Public Affairs Detachment

DEH RAWOD, Afghanistan — Diarrhea and dehydration brought 11-year-old Serdar Mohammad to the health clinic at a base camp near Deh Rawod in southcentral Afghanistan.

The young boy and his 2-year-old nephew, Dabea, traveled nearly six miles on foot from their village to the clinic. Serdar is just one of many local residents who make the journey to receive health care services provided by Coalition forces working here.

A team of Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force — Afghanistan and Combined Joint Task Force-76 medics, along with a CJSOTF physician, treat patients for everything from dehydration to burns. They say the majority of their cases are traumas resulting from gunshot wounds and broken bones from accidents.

"Sometimes it's almost like being in a civilian (emergency room)," said Spc. Marcus Stevenson, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, medic. "You can't teach some of this stuff."

Stevenson is one of several medics from Forward Operating Base Cobra, who rotates in and out of the base camp at Deh Rawod, learning lessons that can't be taught in a classroom.

"Everything that goes on here is a team effort. From the time the patients come in for treatment, until the time they leave," he said.

Indeed, this medical operation is a team effort. In addition to the medical personnel, the clinic also employs Habid Khwas, an Afghan who helps treat and transport patients with minor injuries.

"I try to learn everything I can to help my people and do something for my country," said Khwas, who hopes to one day attend medical school. "I need to know more. One day I may go, but right now I will stay here. I'm happy here and this is my place. This clinic is caring for the people."

There is also an Afghan-American interpreter who recently returned to his homeland from California to work with Coalition forces.

"I came back because I wanted to help my country, to help the people here," said Amirr Abdullah, Deh Rawod base camp interpreter. "The American troops have helped us and I wanted to help them. The people see this clinic as a symbol. It means that life is changing for them, for the better."

With no standard healthcare system in place, particularly in remote areas of Afghanistan, the Deh Rawod clinic is a lifeline for residents who would not normally



Spc. Marcus Stevenson, Co. C, 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt., medic, wraps bandages around a patient with second-degree burns at the Deh Rawod Clinic in southcentral Afghanistan.

have access to doctors or medical treatment.

"My baby was burned, and I brought him here for the doctors to see," said Mohammad Hasahk, a local resident. "People tell us that there is good medicine here and they will take care of us. The doctors do much for us."

The clinic staff sees about 60 to 70 patients a day at the base's front gate.

Dari/Pashto phrase of the week



Afghan cultural tidbit

Dari

How is your family?

Famile shuma chi hal darad?
(Fahmeelay' shoo'mah chi hawl dahrad')

Pashto

How is your family?

Tasu famil su hal lari?
(Ta'soo fahmeel' su-hawl law'ree)

Afghan families are traditionally very large with at least four children. Some men also have more than one wife. The households are normally run by the father who works outside the house. The wife usually does all the housework, such as cleaning, cooking and taking care of the children.

NCOs enforce winter safety standards

Safeguarding the Coalition

Compiled by Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl
17th Public Affairs Detachment

AFGHANISTAN — Someone once wrote, "Those who cannot remember the past, are condemned to repeat it." This is especially true for service members placed in leadership positions throughout the U.S. military.

Leaders are tasked with, among many other things, ensuring the safety of those in their charge. A good leader takes from his experiences, good or bad, and shares them with his fellow servicemen.

The *Freedom Watch* staff solicited the following vignettes from noncommissioned officers operating throughout Afghanistan, asking them to share their experiences and lessons learned while serving as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

This month's vignettes focus on winter safety and ensuring service members are properly protected from the environment and harsh elements.

**Staff Sgt.
Scott Gallegos**
ANA 1st Bde. ETT
mentor



“Safety in this kind of weather comes down to attention to detail.

We always make sure people are properly maintaining their individual equipment, and that they have the gear they need with them.

Before missions, we always do a thorough PMCS. We check all the fluids and the tire pressure to make sure they are at the right levels. We also get a weather report. This attention-to-detail carries over into the missions we go on, too.

We always make sure our guys are being cautious when they are driving because of potentially icy roads. When they swerve to avoid potholes or obstacles, we make sure it's at a safe speed. Otherwise, they run the risk of slipping on ice and getting in an accident.”

**Sgt.
Tremaine Clayton**
76th Sep. Inf. Bde.
medic



“It's always important to conduct proper (pre-combat inspections). We need to make sure our guys are wearing the right gear for the conditions and that they've packed properly.

Before we leave, I always make sure my Soldiers are bringing things like extra uniforms and dry clothes.

It's also important to make sure everyone is drinking water when we're out on a mission.”

**Air Force
Master Sgt.
Arnold Andrews**
455th EOG
aircraft armament
specialist



“Every day our guys get a brief on the weather conditions. We make sure they have their cold weather gear with them in case they need it. We always remind them to stay dry and bundle up.

In our job, it's also important that we keep our equipment protected from the elements. We especially try to keep our (ammunition) loaders inside, out of the cold air and wet weather, otherwise they may not work properly.

Taking these steps helps us ensure that we are able to accomplish our mission.”

Sgt. Daniel Salinas
546th Maint. Co.
team leader



“The first thing I do is make sure my Soldiers are dressed in loose layers. I always check when we're getting ready for missions to ensure they are properly dressed. I don't make them dress by the numbers, but I check up on them.

As a leader, it's my responsibility to check up on them, to make sure they're doing what they need to do to stay warm and safe.”

**Staff Sgt.
Paul S. Hansen**
TF 168
squad leader



“The most important thing I do is check to make sure my Soldiers dress for the weather.

With the new (rapid fielding initiative) gear we're all receiving, there's no reason my Soldiers can't dress for the temperature and conditions. All the new gear works very well.

As leaders, we're responsible for keeping our Soldiers safe. Part of that is ensuring they have what they need to successfully accomplish the mission, with the maximum protection available.”

**Staff Sgt.
Jose Gomez**
58th MP Co.
squad leader



“I've set a minimum uniform standard, especially for my Soldiers who man the (gun) turret.

They are required to wear their Gortex top and bottom, as well as cold-weather gloves. We've also extended our heater hoses up into our turrets to help the gunners stay warmer.

I also make sure I bring extra gear along with me in case someone else gets cold. It's important to always be prepared for anything to happen.”

**Marine Sgt.
Effrain Parra**
2nd Bn., 6th Marines
sniper



“I work in a very small team, and I normally only have one other Marine with me. But we work together to ensure we're prepared for the cold weather.

We always inspect each other before we go out on a mission, and we also inspect each other's gear. We make sure we both have all our cold-weather gear that we may end up needing.”

Army engineers build new Salerno chapel

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Combined Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan — Those seeking a place to worship here will no longer have to settle for a cramped tent.

A newly-built, wooden chapel was dedicated in December and replaces the tent that was previously used for the 1,500 service members and civilians operating at Forward Operating Base Salerno.

The new building is more than twice the size of the old chapel, said Chaplain (Maj.) Judith Hamrick, Combined Task Force Thunder chaplain.

"This facility is available to all our personnel, military and civilian," she said. "It's a place they can all feel at home, and it's their house of worship."

The new building is a welcome change from the tent. Even before deploying here, Hamrick said she heard from other units that the chapel was already out of space.

The Army's chief of chaplains, Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) David H. Hicks, who visited with Soldiers around Afghanistan, was on hand to help dedicate the new facility.

He said it was very special to take part in a chapel dedication in a combat zone.

"We need to recognize this as a very

unique setting, a place that we have been given," said Hicks, adding that the chapel will be a place for worshippers to get away for a moment of reflection, a place to be in touch with God.

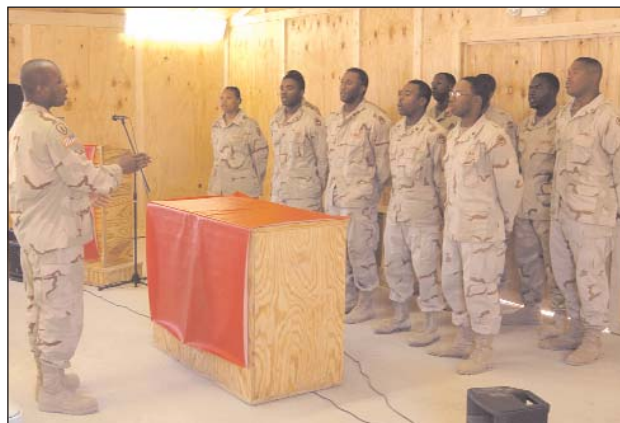
"That's what's beautiful about having a place set apart, and that's what we want to do with this facility today," he said. "We don't want to hinder, and we don't want to be hindered in our worship because we don't have adequate facilities."

The chapel was built by Soldiers of the 528th Engineer Battalion of the Louisiana National Guard.

Sgt. Charles Johnson, who was in charge of the project, said the Soldiers put a lot of extra work into the project because they wanted to make the building special.

"Instead of just building a bland, regular building like you see in the military, we wanted to spruce it up a little," said Johnson, a Company A, 528th Eng. Bn., carpentry and masonry specialist.

The Soldiers installed a cathedral roof instead of a flat roof, seven-paneled



Spc. Eric Loche (left), Co. A, 528th Eng. Bn., leads the FOB Salerno Gospel Choir during the dedication of the new chapel his company built at FOB Salerno.

"peak" windows, and wooden beams across the ceiling of the main room.

Many of the engineers put in late nights to get the chapel ready for the dedication, said Johnson.

Because there is still a threat of rocket attacks to the base, the Soldiers had to practice light discipline and used small, pen-sized flashlights to see the wood they were cutting.

Eventually, there will be shutters on the windows so worshippers can practice light discipline during night services.

Survey: Construction begins with proper planning

continued from Page 7

For the lavatory project, the computer model they design will determine the location of the facilities.

"A lot of planning can be done based on what we find," said Rivers. "Because our information impacts so much in the plan-



Sgt. Frank Magni

Sgt. Joseph Rivers records points he shot with the Geodimeter while on FOB Orgun-E. Rivers' survey team created a computerized model of FOB Orgun-E so planners could find the best location to place facilities.

ning phases, we do the most thorough job possible."

The battalion's ten-man survey section is organized into smaller groups during many of their missions, creating special relationships within the survey teams.

The team in Orgun-E began their relationship at advanced individual training, giving the members something to look forward to when coming to Afghanistan. Rivers volunteered for the mission once he knew who would be on his survey team.

"Once I knew who would be going, I did everything I could to come along," he said.

While every member of the Orgun-E team gets a great amount of satisfaction contributing his skills to Operation Enduring Freedom, all say working with friends takes the experience to another level.

Spc. Kenneth Thompson, HHC, 367th Eng. Bn., said one of his major motivations in creating a good product is knowing he is working with professionals.

"Working with these guys just makes all of this better," he said.

When the team takes their computerized model back to Bagram Air Base, the construction projects will move into a different stage of planning and, eventually, execution.

For the surveyors, it is on to a different mission in a different location.

"It is very satisfying to have our own little part of the mission," said Rivers. "What we do does matter and improves things in Afghanistan."

Essay: Selfless service — ‘One Team’ gives selflessly

This essay is the winner of the CJTF-76 values essay contest for “Selfless Service.”

Each and every day, many men and women perform acts of selfless service. I know of a special place where selfless service is a common thing. That place is called Bagram Air Base. I’m very proud to say that I am part of the “One Team” that will always endlessly give its service day-to-day, without asking for anything in return.

Many people call us heroes, but I call myself a person who is always willing to help someone in his time of need, no matter how good or bad the situation may seem. In the end, what it all boils down to is the fact that when asked for our help, “One Team” was there to give its selfless service in overcoming terrorism and dictatorship, to make this world a better place and make a brighter future for our children and the lives of others.

Many have made the ultimate sacrifice of selfless service, which will not be forgotten — especially to the families who lost loved ones and the people of Afghanistan.

Selfless service is often associated with military people. But the real story does not begin here, it starts in the hearts and minds of people like you who come together as one nation and believe that you can make a change in the world

with selfless service. In reality, all of our selfless service and a powerful military would not be possible without the help of everyday, normal people like you, your family and friends. People who take pride and the time out of their busy lives to thank our young men and women who serve our country without hesitance, also perform selfless acts. It is your support, thoughts, and not to mention thousands of care packages and letters, that remind people like myself that our American nation supports us and that what we are doing is the worthy

of the U.S. Navy. No matter what branch I choose, I know we are all “One Team,” with one mission and one goal — revive democracy for the people of Afghanistan and make it home alive to our loved ones as quickly as possible. No one said it would be easy, or that freedom was cheap. But one thing is for sure, what everyone has in their hearts is that they want their children to be free and have a better life than the one we have. Our selfless service does not come from one person alone, but from the many sacrifices that families and loved ones give, allowing their closest loved one to be away from their family for the cause of living the life of freedom that our nation has today. And share with others what each citizen in the United States has — life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. If one Afghan life was bettered or changed, then all of our selfless service efforts are not in vain.

So I leave you with one thought. At the end of your busy, long day, just before you lay your head to rest safely in your warm bed, ask yourself what act of selfless service have you done today in support of changing someone’s life and making it better, no matter how big or how small.

Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class
Daniel Vasquez
CJTF-76 Command Group

SELFLESS SERVICE:
Put the welfare of the nation, the Army,
and your subordinates before your own.

cause of freedom. Not knowing in whose hands they would reach, or where your packages would end up, caring people continuously and selflessly devote their time to open up their families, hearts, and homes to our fellow military brothers and sisters and the cause of freedom.

Each person has his own special way of contributing their acts of selfless service. I take pride in extending my choice of selfless service one step further by joining my fellow service members in serving my country as a member

Letters to the Editor

The *Freedom Watch* would like to publish your opinions on topics of importance and interest to those serving in OEF.

Please send your thoughts in letter form to the editor. All letters e-mailed must include full name, unit, address and, when possible, telephone number. We will not print anonymous letters. Please limit all letters to 200 words or less.

We reserve the right to edit letters for length, clarity and decorum.

Please avoid implying criticism of U.S. or DoD policies and programs, advocating or disputing specific political, diplomatic or legislative matters, or implying criticism of host nation or host nation sensitivities.

Please send your letters to: stumpc@baf.afgn.army.mil

We look forward to hearing from you!

OEF “Values” Essay Contest

Personnel in Afghanistan are invited to participate in the Operation Enduring Freedom bi-monthly “Values” Essay Contest sponsored by CJTF-76.

The current value is “**Loyalty.**”

Rules

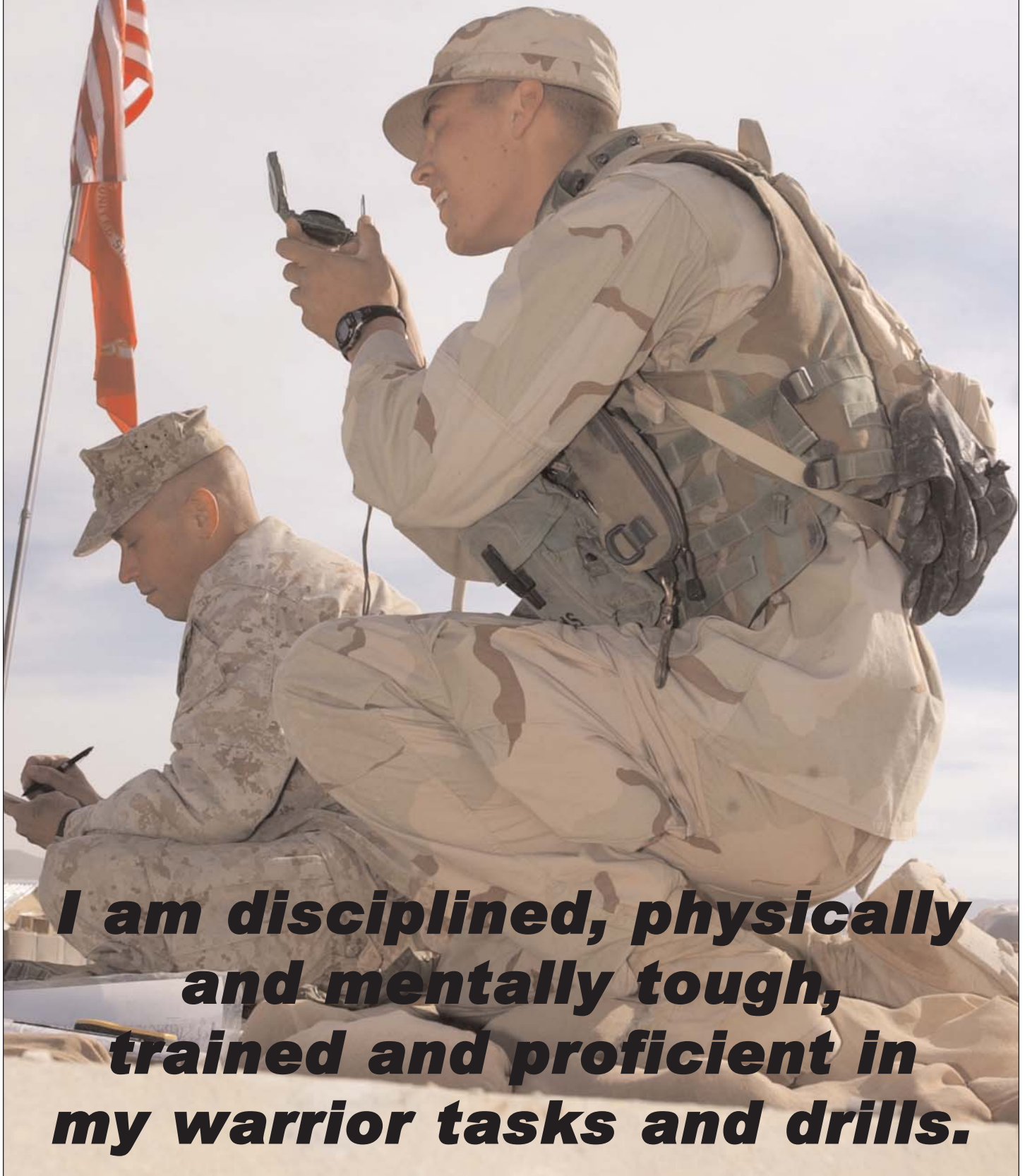
- ☐ Essays should include the definition of the featured value and your own experience(s) that reinforce this value
- ☐ Essays will be at least one and no more than two pages (typed/neatly printed and double-spaced)
- ☐ Please include a cover page with Title, Author’s Name, Supervisor’s Name, Unit/Organization, Phone Number and e-mail address if available
- ☐ Do not put name directly on essay
- ☐ Submit essays to EO Adviser nearest your location, via e-mail or hard copy by Jan. 25.

The winning essay writer will receive a CJTF-76 Commanding General’s Certificate of Achievement and other prizes to be announced. The essay will also be published in a future issue of the *Freedom Watch*, and in the bi-monthly EO Update.

EO is also looking for E-7s and above to help review essay submissions and select the winning essay. Call the Bagram EO Senior Adviser at DSN 318-231-3021 for more information.

Freedom Watch

January 16, 2005



***I am disciplined, physically
and mentally tough,
trained and proficient in
my warrior tasks and drills.***